



Focus on Fleet

"There's no such thing as Government money. There is only Taxpayer money."

Spring/Summer 2003

A publication of the SC Budget and Control Board

General Services Division, Office of State Fleet Management

From the State Fleet Manager

In the past two fiscal years we've all had a rough time financially in State Government. Budget times have been tight, to put it mildly, and there's no end in sight to the current austerity.

With that in mind, we have added a rubric to our title box (at the top of this page). This has been our motto at State Fleet for a number of years:

There is no such thing as government money. There is only taxpayer money.

We follow this motto in every aspect of our business at State Fleet, no matter how small. We use recycled toner and ink cartridges for our printers, keep our computers until they are on their last legs, and perform every maintenance service scrupulously, to ensure that vehicles can be operated with maximum reliability.

We have always striven to be leaders in this area of government. After all, money doesn't just grow on trees: every penny we receive in State (or any) government came from the sweat of some working person's brow. We should always treat that money with respect and spend it responsibly, with

even greater care than we would spend our own. The people who elect our representatives and other government officials expect good stewardship of their resources.

Other items in this issue include an informative article about Fleet Safety Officer Ron Tvorik's trip to the Michelin Proving Grounds in Laurens County, South Carolina. Ron had the privilege of participating in some high-level safety training and contributes this report of the events.

Also in this issue is a very special story about the military veterans who are part of the State Fleet Management family. (Of course this includes me; many of you know that I am a retired soldier.)

We have also posted in this issue the details of State Fleet's new Web site, which went live the week of 23 June, and the dates for our popular Van Driver Safety Course over the new fiscal year.

With that in mind, no matter what happens...

...Y'all be safe out there!

*—Gerald W. Calk
State Fleet Manager*



War Stories

As we approach Independence Day, and with Memorial Day still fresh in our minds, we at State Fleet are reminded of our military friends, family and work colleagues.

This isn't too hard at State Fleet, because a number of our colleagues are retired military or reserves. Bob Bonner (who is now retired from State Fleet), Gerry Calk, Tony Jones, Bill Page and Eleese Portee all have a record of service in the U.S. military.

Gerry Calk, State Fleet Manager

Gerry Calk left high school early at age 17 to join the Army. When he retired from

(continued on page 3)

Inside Focus on Fleet:

- SFM Website goes live (3)
- Focus on Safety: at the Michelin testing track (p. 2)
- War Stories (pp. 1, 3)
- Van Driver Safety Course Dates for FY 2004 (p. 4)



Focus on Safety



A student drives a Ford Mustang with underinflated rear tires on the Michelin test track

On March 19, 2003, a group of employees from the SC Department of Transportation had the opportunity to drive on the test track at the **Michelin Proving Grounds** in Laurens County. As **State Fleet Safety Officer**, I was invited to accompany the group for the hands-on demonstrations of braking and vehicle handling. The fact that it was raining was no obstacle since two of the three exercises we did had sprinkling systems to ensure slick conditions.

As the folks at Michelin stressed, the tire is the only part of the vehicle touching the pavement, and they support thousands

of pounds. Looking at (inspecting) your tires can clue you in on potential dangers — things like determining safe tread, balding, uneven wear, damage and the need for realignment or replacement. The instructors reminded us that if your tire looks low on air, it is probably in a single digit for PSI. Using a tire gauge is the only way to be sure of tire pressure.

My first exercise consisted of driving two identical Ford Mustangs on a special track designed with sharp curves and dozens of water sprinklers. The tires of the first car were inflated to the proper pressure;

the second car's tires had only 20 PSI in the rear tires. There was an unbelievable difference in control. Our instructors pushed us to ensure we would experience losing control of the vehicle. Maximum speed on the straightaway and hard ABS braking just before sharp curves were the rule of the day. The techniques they taught us really worked with proper tire inflation.

The second exercise consisted of driving on a large oval in wet conditions. We were asked to keep the vehicle on a solid yellow line on the inside of the oval. The first vehicle I drove had good rear tires as compared to the second vehicle with poor rear tires. As in the previous exercise, our instructor pushed us beyond our comfort level. As we all know, slamming on the brakes is not always the way to prevent a mishap: correct steering is a key factor. This is truly "seat of the pants" driving. You become one with the vehicle for acceleration, braking and steering.

The third and final exercise consisted of a tire blowout at high speed. A blasting cap was connected to C-4 explosive secured to the tire. Inside the vehicle, the instructor had a control device to blow the tire at an unexpected moment. The first blowout was on the left rear tire of an SUV traveling 55 MPH in the rain. The second time around, it was the left front tire of a Ford Crown Victoria, again over 50 MPH. In this exercise we learned a new method for handling a blowout. The new approach is to step all the way down on the accelerator, then immediately lift up the pedal, all while keeping the steering wheel steady. The brief acceleration gives the car additional momentum and helps keep it under control long enough to pull over and gently apply the brakes. This technique works for both front and rear blowouts.

This was an educational and worthwhile experience and I thank **Terecia Wilson, Safety Director of the SC Department of Transportation**, for inviting me to attend.

*For more information on the Fleet Safety Program, contact **Ron Tvorik** at 803-737-1602.*

South Carolina State Budget and Control Board

Mark Sanford, *Chairman, Governor of South Carolina*

Grady L. Patterson, *State Treasurer*

Richard Eckstrom, *Comptroller General*

Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., *Chairman, Senate Finance Committee*

Robert W. Harrell, Jr., *Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee*

Frank W. Fusco, *Executive Director*

Joseph O. Rogers, III, *Director, General Services Division*

Gerald W. Calk, *State Fleet Manager*

Jonathan Eason, *Editor*

Margie Valladares, *Associate Editor*

Focus on Fleet is published four times a year by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, General Services Division, Office of State Fleet Management, 1022 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201-3160.

the Army in 1986, he had earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Boston University.

Some of the things Gerry liked about military life were the clean lines of communication, the varied locations and assignments, and "the feeling I was doing something important." He also noted that the Army is "the ultimate meritocracy."

Among his decorations were a Meritorious Service Award and three Army Commendation medals. On an interesting note, Gerry once pulled guard duty at Spandau prison in Berlin, where he kept watch over **Rudolf Hess, Baldur von Schirach** and **Albert Speer** — at that time, the prison's only surviving inmates.

Bill Page

State Fleet Maintenance Manager **Bill Page** also spent roughly 20 years in the US Army, retiring in 1978 as a Chief Warrant Officer, a rank he had held for many years. A Warrant Officer is "warranted" rather than commissioned, as an officer is; it falls between the enlisted ranks and the officers' corps.

"It's the best rank in the Army," says Mr. Page. "No one would question you because you were a recognized technical expert in your field."

Bill liked "many, many things" about the Army. He enjoyed the varied jobs, from mechanic to procurement officer. One unusual assignment for the Procurement Office in Viet Nam required him to come up with a process for making dehydrated rice. Bill served in a number of overseas assignments, including Germany, the Dominican Republic, and two tours in Viet Nam.

Elease Portee

Lt. Col. **Elease Portee** (USAR) was part of the last class to enter the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1975. Before 1974, women were not allowed to participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), so Elease had to come in through the WAC. (The U.S. Military Academy would not open its doors to women until 1976.)

This Columbia native and Benedict College alumna served eight years on active duty before going on reserve status.

As detailed in the Summer 2002 *Focus on Fleet*, Lt. Col. Portee served a special tour of duty at the Pentagon shortly after September 11th, 2001. She was called up to serve on the Crisis Action Team (CAT) at the Army Operations Center from November 2001 to March 2002. These units mobilized reserve units and personnel for active duty to support Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle.

"I liked serving," says Lt. Col. Portee. "I felt good about it because I felt I needed to do something after 9-11. I felt proud to serve again at a time of need."

Bob Bonner

Former Executive Manager of Operations **Bob Bonner** served in the Alabama National Guard from 1959 to 1965 before accepting a commission in the U.S. Army in 1965, upon graduation from Auburn University. He retired in 1985 as a major.

He served in the Dominican Republic in the 1965 conflict, two "short tours" in Vietnam, and in Thailand and Germany. In Germany he was involved in logistical planning for SACEUR (Supreme Allied Command Europe). He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for his service in Thailand and the Bronze Star for service in Vietnam.

Bob enjoyed the variety of work in the Army. "By the time you got tired of one

assignment, it was time for a new one." He also mentioned the tremendous responsibilities laid on young people in the armed services.

Tony Jones

CVRP Contract Specialist **Tony Jones** went into the US Army in 1976 and retired as a Master Sergeant (E-8) in 1996; he came to work for State Fleet in 1998. Tony served two extended tours in Germany, a short tour in Korea, and shorter assignments in Greece and Japan.

The best thing about the Army, says Tony, is the availability of education. "There's an opportunity there to get a good quality education. You just have to take the initiative to go out and get it." Tony also says the Army "opened up other opportunities I would never have had in civilian life."

During his career, Tony earned a Meritorious Service medal, numerous Army Achievement citations, and two Army Commendation medals. Summing up his experience, he said:

"I have no regrets in serving my country, good or bad. I would be more than happy to do it all again."

Editor's Note: Mr. Bonner retired from State Fleet in November 2002, but this article was struck from the Fall 2002 issue of Focus on Fleet.

New SFM Site Goes Live

Since 1998, State Fleet Management has led the way among State agencies in terms of Web content. As promised in the last issue, State Fleet's Web site has added some important features. Most important of all, the site is now organized to make it easier for users to find information.

Here are some of the new or improved features:

- More fillable online forms.
- A page listing all SFM services.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page.
- A link to a list of stations accepting the Wright Express Card.

- Comprehensive information about the State Fuel Card program.
- Complete information about the State Fleet Safety Program, including a training schedule.

Special thanks to Doug Smoak, General Services Division Webmaster, for his hard work on this project, and congratulations to SFM representatives Teresa Duncan, Peggy Kirkland, Rob Malpass and Keith Watts.

For more information about the State Fleet Web site, contact Jonathan Eason at 803.737.1239. Visit the site at <http://www.ogs.state.sc.us/statefleet>.

General Services Division
State Fleet Management
1022 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201



Van Driver's Safety Course

Dates Announced for FY2004

The Van Driver's Safety course has proven very popular with our customers who own or lease fifteen-passenger vans.

The course will be given ten times in FY2004, once each month except October and December 2003. The course meets from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Criminal Justice Academy on Broad River Road in Columbia.

It is possible, that more training dates will be added during the course of the fiscal year, but it is far from certain. Register as soon as possible to ensure that you will have a place in the course.

For more information about the Van Driver's Safety Course, or about Fleet Safety in general, contact Ron Tvorik, State Fleet Safety Officer, at 803-737-1602.

The course will be offered on the following dates. As always, the cost is \$25.00.

- 18 July 2003
- 8 August 2003
- 19 September 2003
- 21 November 2003
- 16 January 2004
- 27 February 2004
- 5 March 2004
- 9 April 2004
- 21 May 2004
- 11 June 2004

Check out State Fleet Management's Web site at

<http://www.ogs.state.sc.us/statefleet>

for the latest information on Driver Training, including the Van Driver's Safety Course, the DDC-4 and DDC-8, and defensive driving courses offered by other agencies and at other locations throughout South Carolina.

Coming in the Fall 2003 *Focus on Fleet:*

- Many exciting and interesting stories!
- Focus on Safety